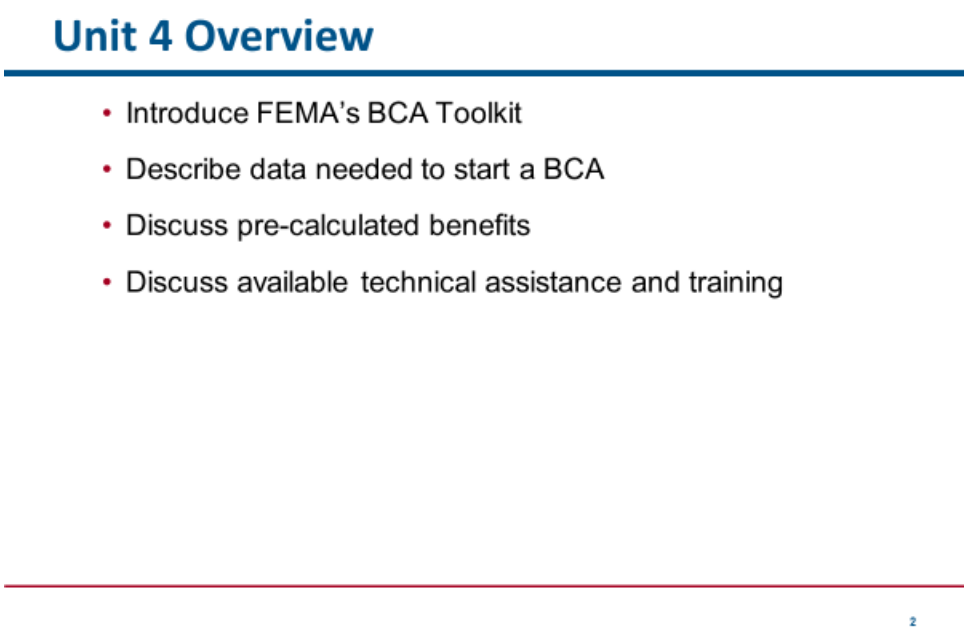
Unit 4

Starting Your BCA

Unit 4 Overview

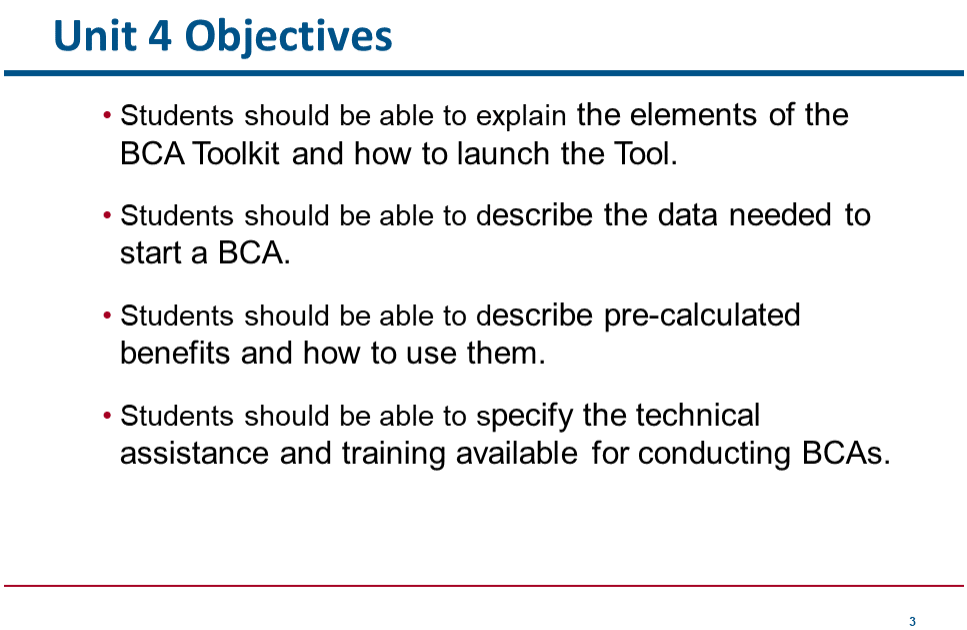


Visual 1: Unit 4 Overview

Unit 4 will cover the following:

- Introduce FEMA's BCA Toolkit
- Describe data needed to start a BCA
- Discuss pre-calculated benefits
- Discuss available technical assistance and training

Unit 4 Objectives

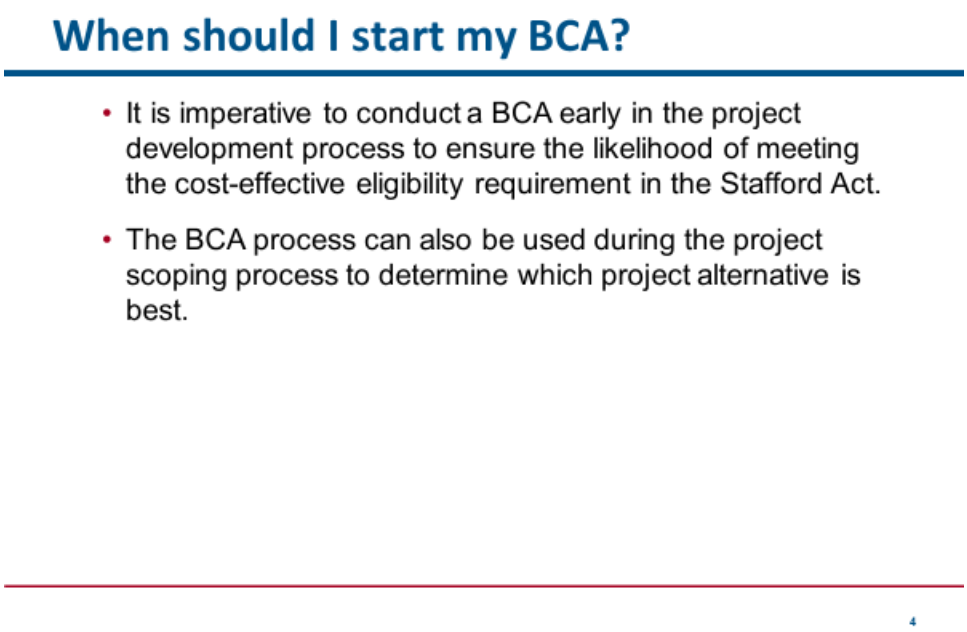


Visual 2: Unit 4 Objectives

Unit 4 has several objectives. At the end of this unit, students should:

- Explain the elements of the BCA Toolkit and how to launch the Tool.
- Describe the data needed to start a BCA.
- Describe pre-calculated benefits and how to use them.
- Specify the technical assistance and training available for conducting BCAs.

When should I start my BCA?



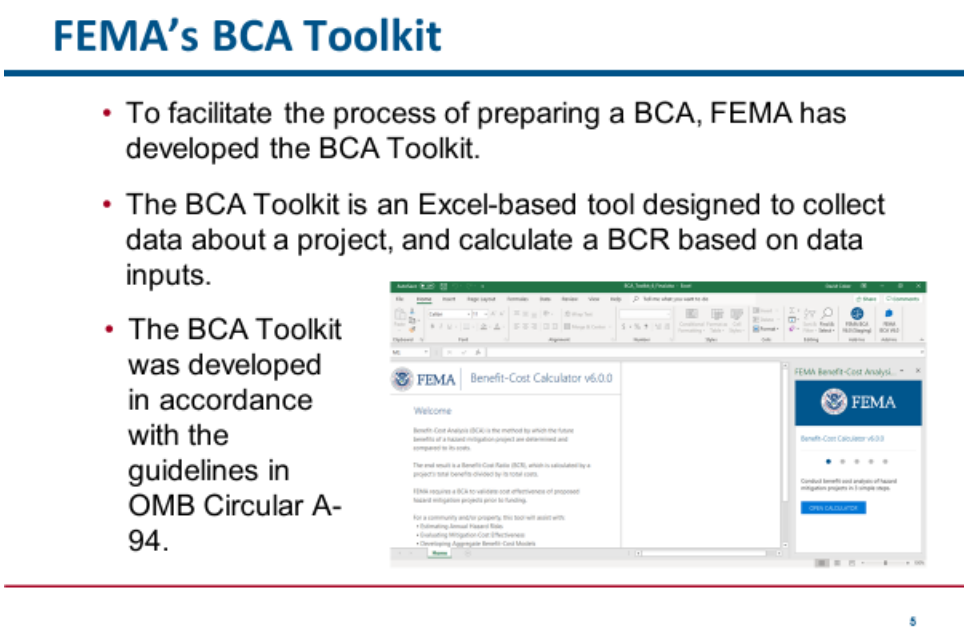
Visual 3: When should I start my BCA?

It is imperative to conduct a BCA early in the project development process to ensure the likelihood of meeting the cost-effective eligibility requirement in the Stafford Act.

The BCA process can also be used during the project scoping process to determine which project alternative is best.

You'll see as we go through the various project types that some require fairly minimal data to run a BCA. It's perfectly fine to enter estimates in the tool as a starting point to get an idea of whether your project will be cost effective, provided that you refine and document the data as you get better numbers.

FEMA's BCA Toolkit



Visual 4: BCA Toolkit

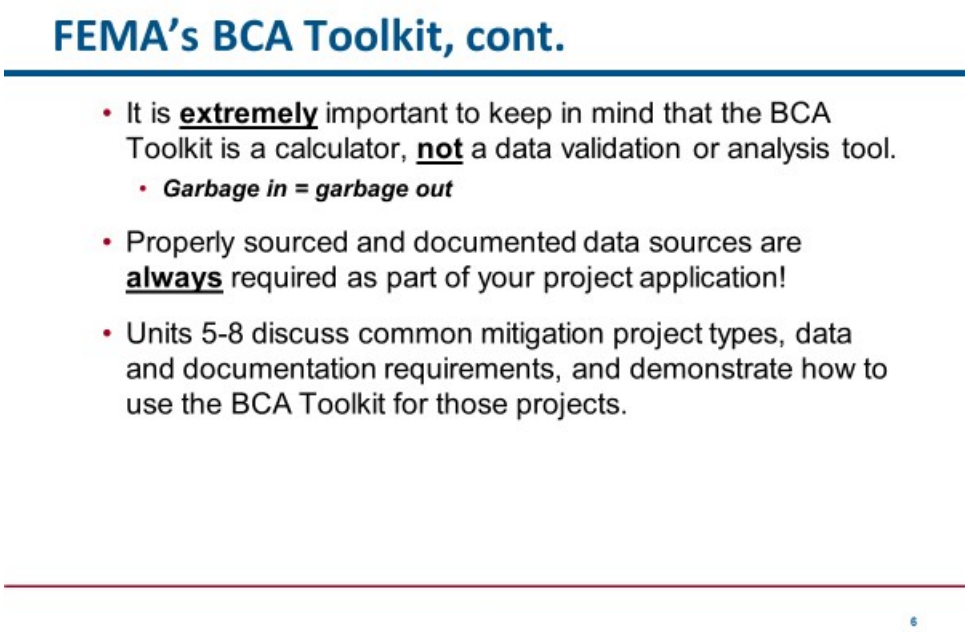
Because most people are not professional economists, FEMA has created the BCA Toolkit to assist applicants and subapplicants with the process of calculating a project's benefits and costs.

The BCA Toolkit is an Excel-based tool designed to collect data about a project, and calculate a BCR based on data inputs. It can be used on Windows, Macs, and other devices such as tablets. It is compatible with Microsoft Office 2013 and later.

The BCA Toolkit was developed in accordance with the guidelines in OMB Circular A-94.

We will show how to download and open the tool in a moment.

FEMA's BCA Toolkit



Visual 5: BCA Toolkit, cont.

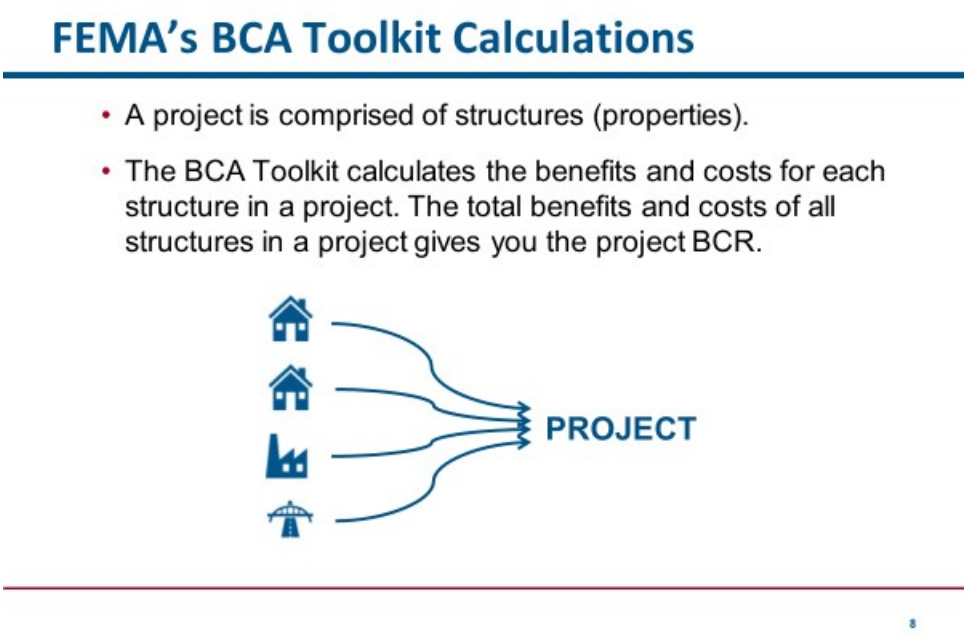
It is extremely important to keep in mind that the BCA Toolkit is a calculator, not a data validation or analysis tool.

Garbage in = garbage out

Properly sourced and documented data sources are always required as part of your project application! Units 5-8 discuss common mitigation project types, data and documentation requirements, and demonstrate how to use the BCA Toolkit for those projects.

It's also important to keep in mind that the BCA is only one part of your project application. It is possible to have a cost-effective project that is not eligible for HMA funding.

FEMA's BCA Toolkit



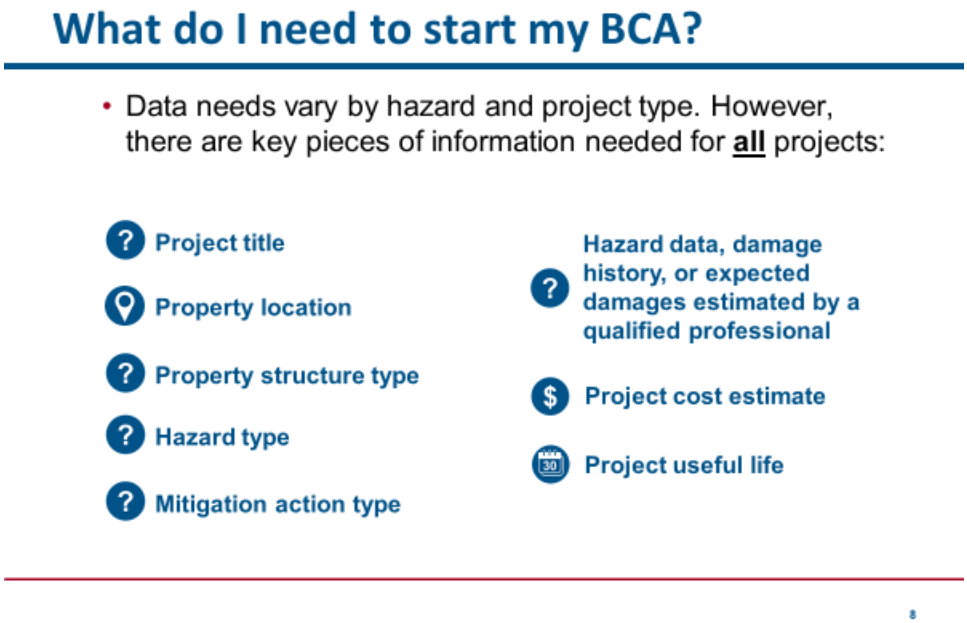
Visual 6: FEMA's BCA Toolkit Calculations

A project is comprised of structures (properties).

The BCA Toolkit calculates the benefits and costs for each structure in a project. The total benefits and costs of all structures in a project gives you the project BCR.

You might have only one structure in your project, or you might have hundreds.

What do I need to start my BCA?



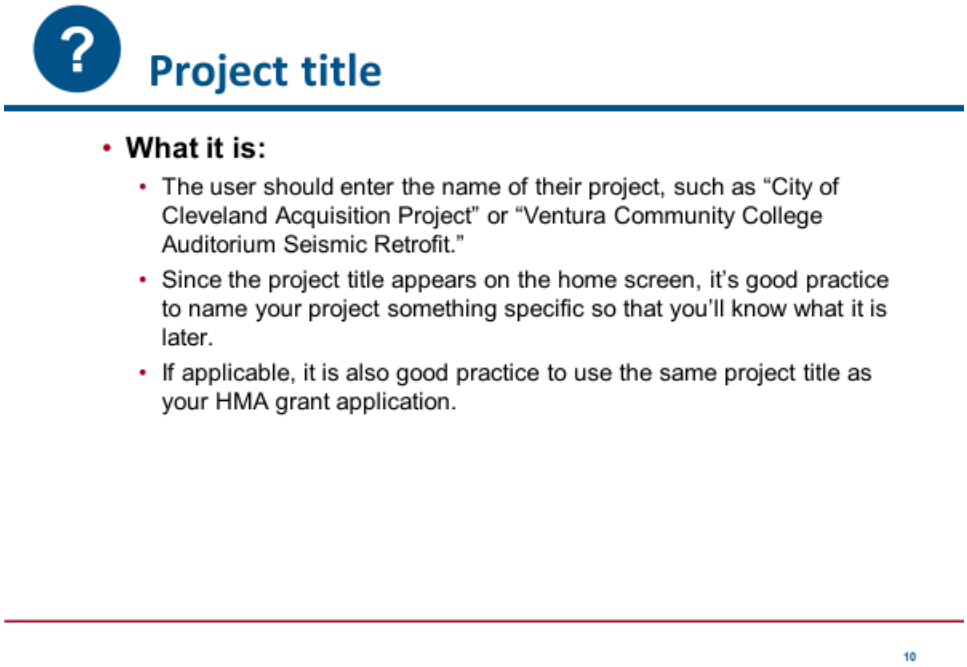
Visual 7: What do I need to start my BCA?

Data needs vary by hazard and project type. However, there are key pieces of information needed for **all** projects:

- Project title
- Property location
- Property structure type
- Hazard type
- Mitigation action type
- Hazard date, damage history, or expected damages estimated by a qualified professional
- Project cost estimate
- Project useful life

Let's discuss each of these.

Project title



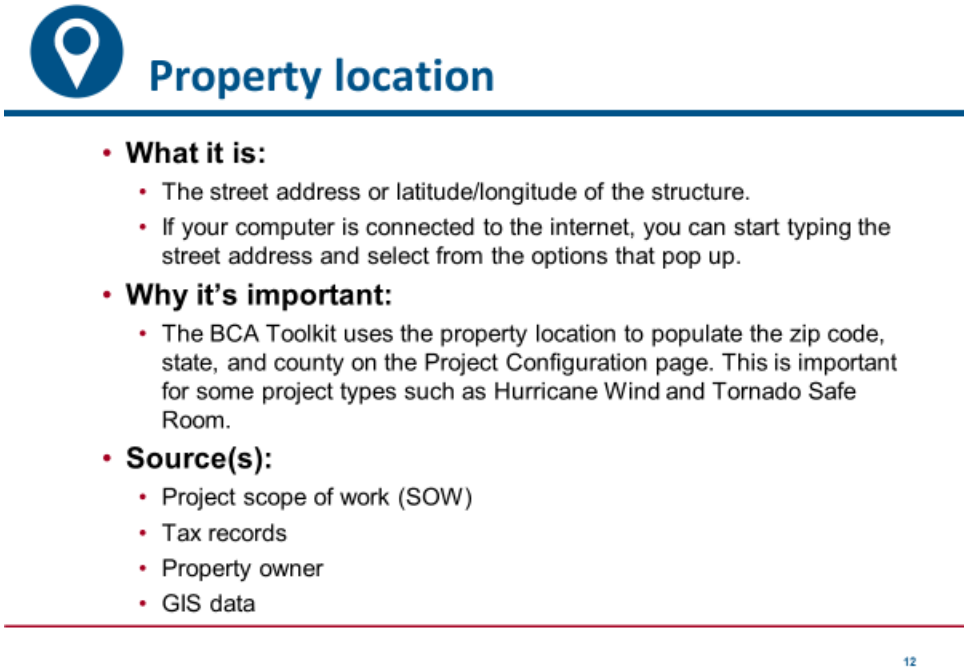
Visual 8: Project title

The user should enter the name of their project, such as "City of Cleveland Acquisition Project" or "Ventura Community College Auditorium Seismic Retrofit."

Since the project title appears on the home screen, you will want to name your project something that you'll know what it is. The projects you've created will all appear on the Home screen in a list, so naming something "Project" or "Elevation" may not be helpful to you down the line.

If applicable, it is also good practice to use the same project title as your HMA grant application.

Property location



Visual 9: Property location

What it is:

- The street address or latitude/longitude of the structure.
- If your computer is connected to the internet, you can start typing the street address and select from the options that pop up. This is a new feature in Version 6.0.

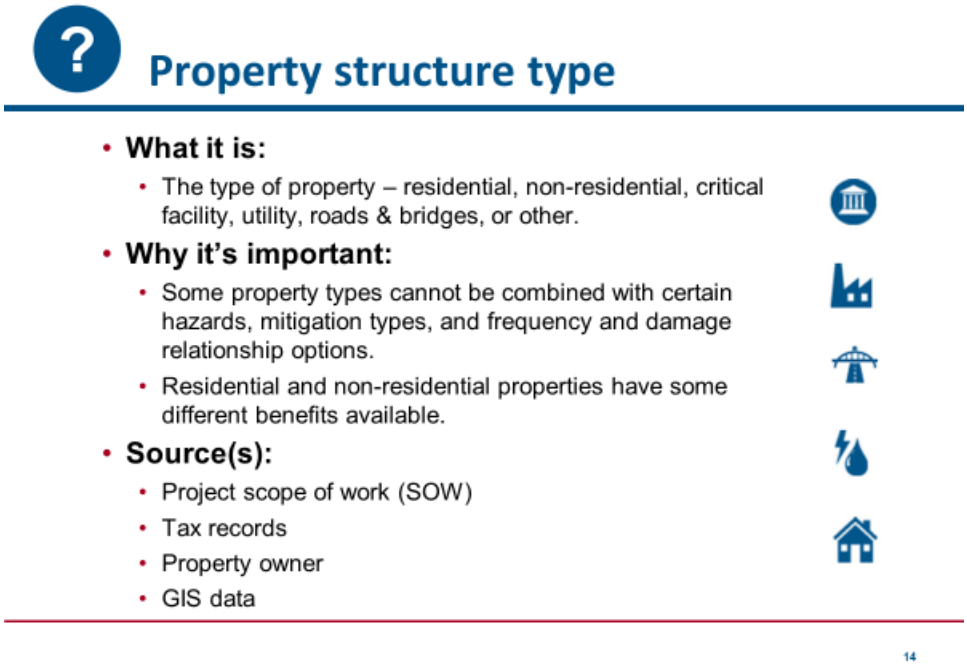
Why it's important:

- The BCA Toolkit uses the property location to populate the zip code, state, and county on the Project Configuration page. This is important for some project types such as Hurricane Wind and Tornado Safe Room.

Source(s):

- Project scope of work (SOW)
- Tax records
- Property owner
- GIS data

Property structure type



Visual 10: Property structure type

What it is:

- The type of property – residential, non-residential, critical facility, utility, roads & bridges, or other.

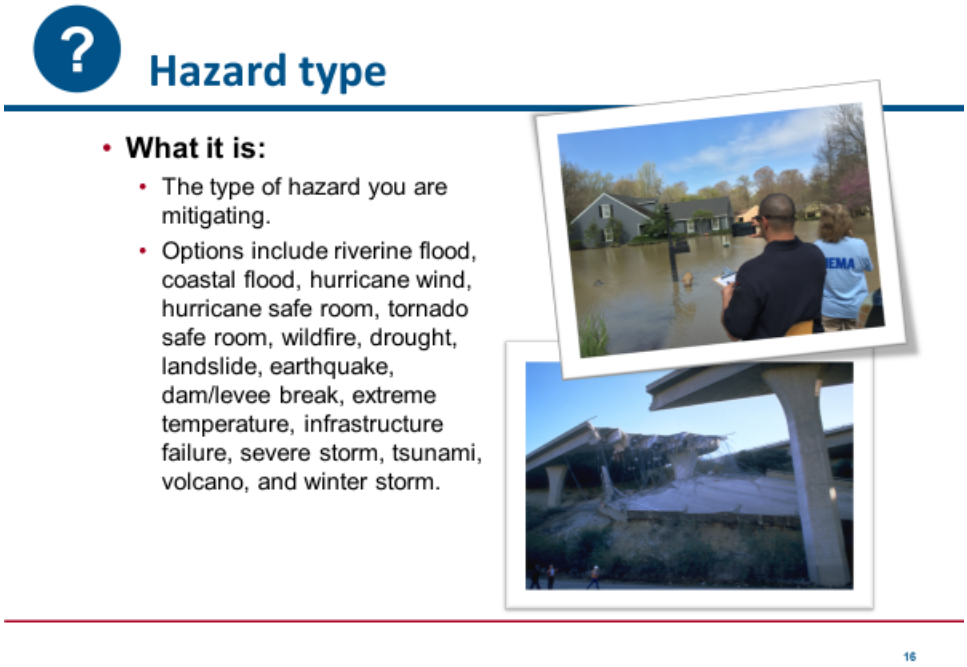
Why it's important:

- Some property types cannot be combined with certain hazards, mitigation types, and frequency and damage relationship options. If you see options grayed out in the BCA Toolkit, it is because that combination of options is not permissible.
- Residential and non-residential properties have some different benefits available.

Source(s):

- Project scope of work (SOW)
- Tax records
- Property owner
- GIS data

Hazard type

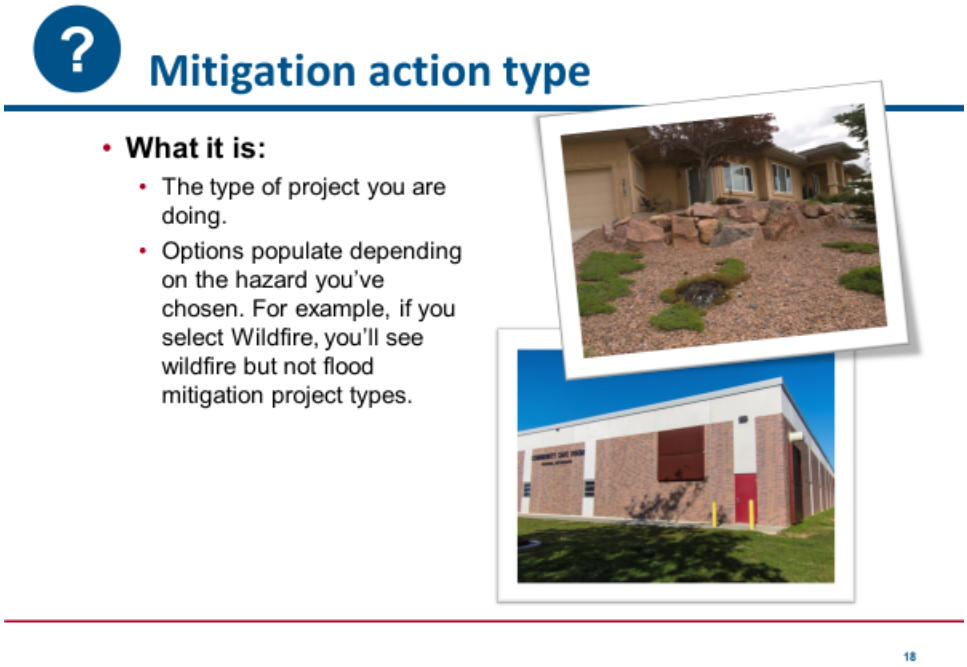


Visual 11: Hazard type

What it is:

- The type of hazard you are mitigating.
- Options include riverine flood, coastal flood, hurricane wind, hurricane safe room, tornado safe room, wildfire, drought, landslide, earthquake, dam/levee break, extreme temperature, infrastructure failure, severe storm, tsunami, volcano, and winter storm.

Mitigation action type

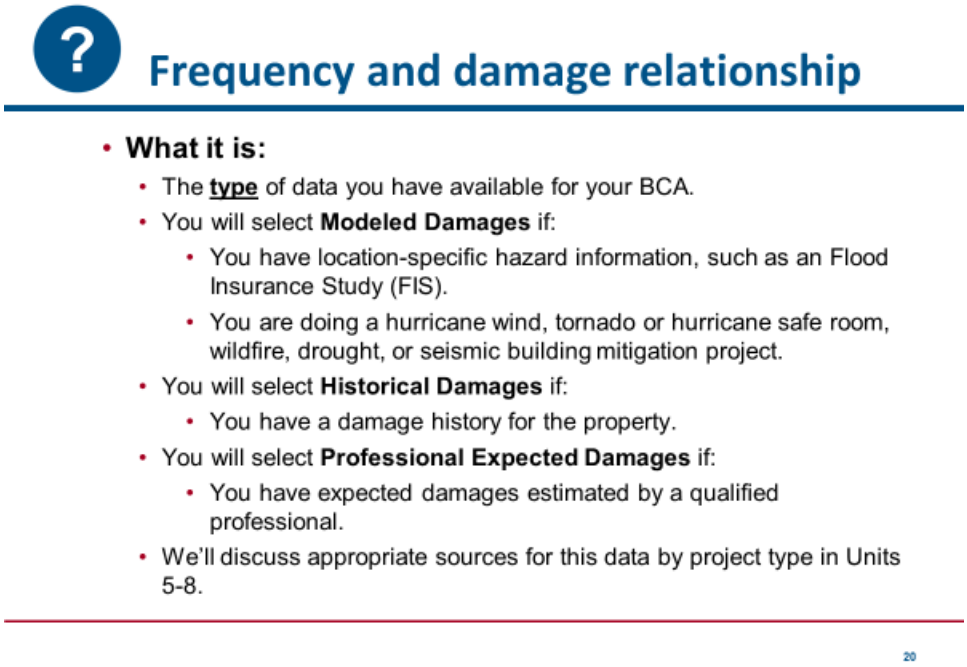


Visual 12: Mitigation action type

What it is:

- The type of project you are doing.
- Options populate depending on the hazard you've chosen. For example, if you select Wildfire, you'll see wildfire but not flood mitigation project types.

Frequency and damage relationship



Visual 13: Frequency and damage relationship

What it is:

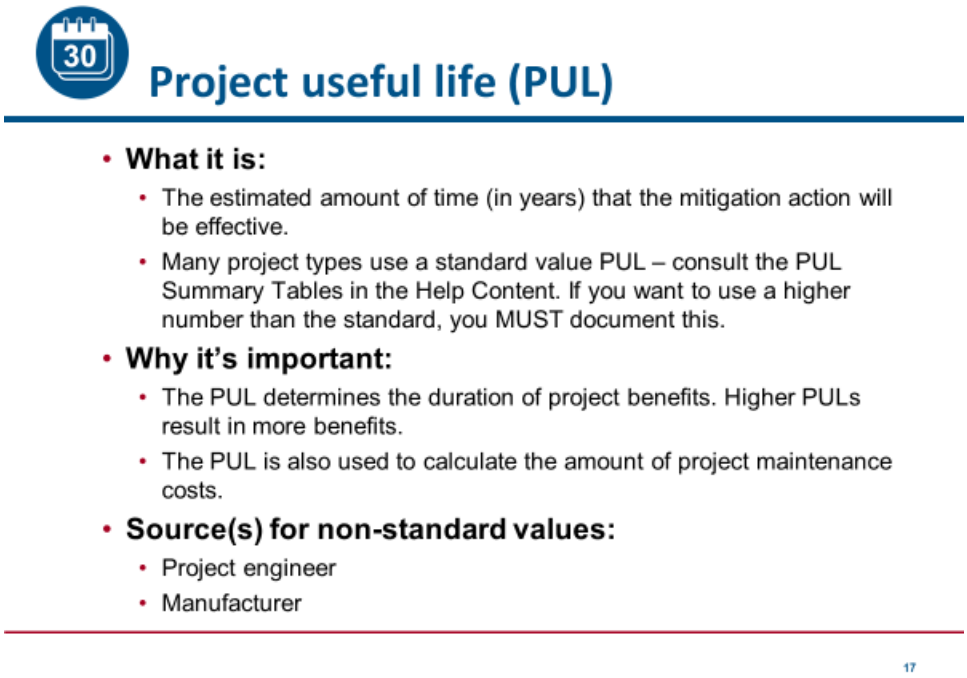
- The type of data you have available for your BCA.
- You will select Modeled Damages if:
  - You have location-specific hazard information, such as an Flood Insurance Study (FIS).
  - You are doing a hurricane wind, tornado or hurricane safe room, wildfire, drought, or seismic building mitigation project.
- You will select Historical Damages if:
  - You have a damage history for the property.
- You will select Professional Expected Damages if:
  - You have expected damages estimated by a qualified professional.

You will not actually input that data here, but you need to know what TYPE of data you have.

Projects that mitigate non-buildings, such as utility infrastructure or roads/bridges, will always use Historical or Professional Expected Damages. Historical and Professional Expected Damages are what was called Damage Frequency Assessment (DFA) in older versions of the Toolkit.

We'll discuss appropriate sources for this data by project type in Units 5-8.

Project useful life (PUL)



Visual 14: PUL

What it is:

- The estimated amount of time (in years) that the mitigation action will be effective.
- Many project types use a standard value PUL – consult the PUL Summary Tables in the Help Content. If you want to use a higher number than the standard, you MUST document this.

Why it's important:

- The PUL determines the duration of project benefits. Higher PULs result in more benefits.
- The PUL is also used to calculate the amount of project maintenance costs.

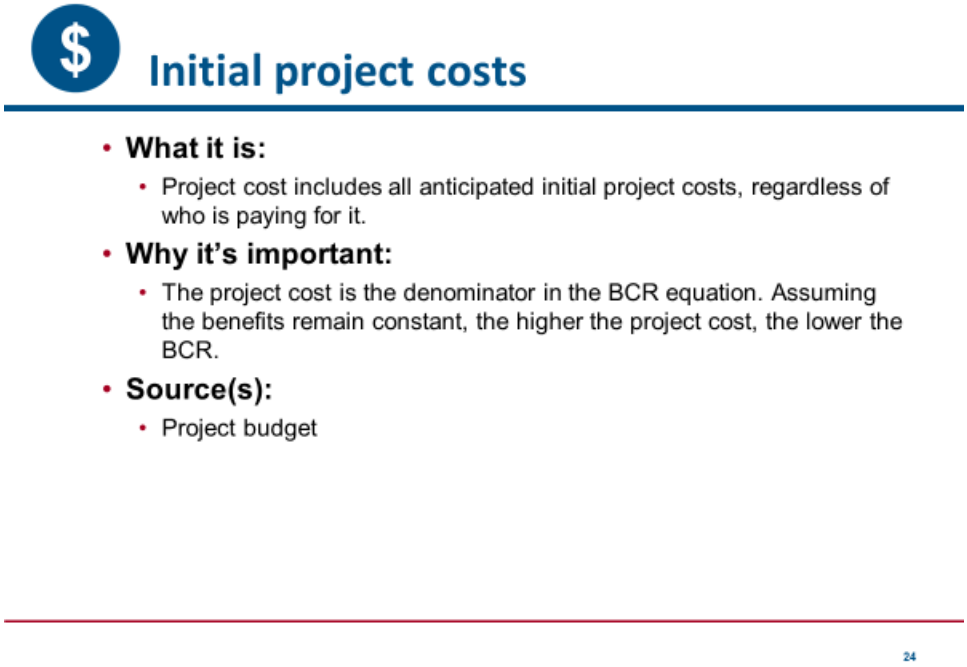
Source(s) for non-standard values:

- Project engineer
- Manufacturer

Many project types use a standard value PUL. For acquisitions, the software automatically shows 100 years and it cannot be changed.

For other project types, consult the PUL Summary Tables in the Help Content. If you want to use a higher number than the standard, you MUST document this by putting a note in the comment box referring the reviewer to the applicable document in your project application (i.e. "See Elevation_PUL.pdf in application.") Acceptable sources for higher PULs are signed/stamped letters from engineers or other qualified professionals, or copies of manufacturer guidance. Even with documentation, a PUL value cannot be higher than the highest Acceptable Limits value in the PUL Summary Tables.

Initial project costs



Visual 15: Initial project costs

What it is:

- Project cost includes all anticipated initial project costs, regardless of who is paying for it.

Why it's important:

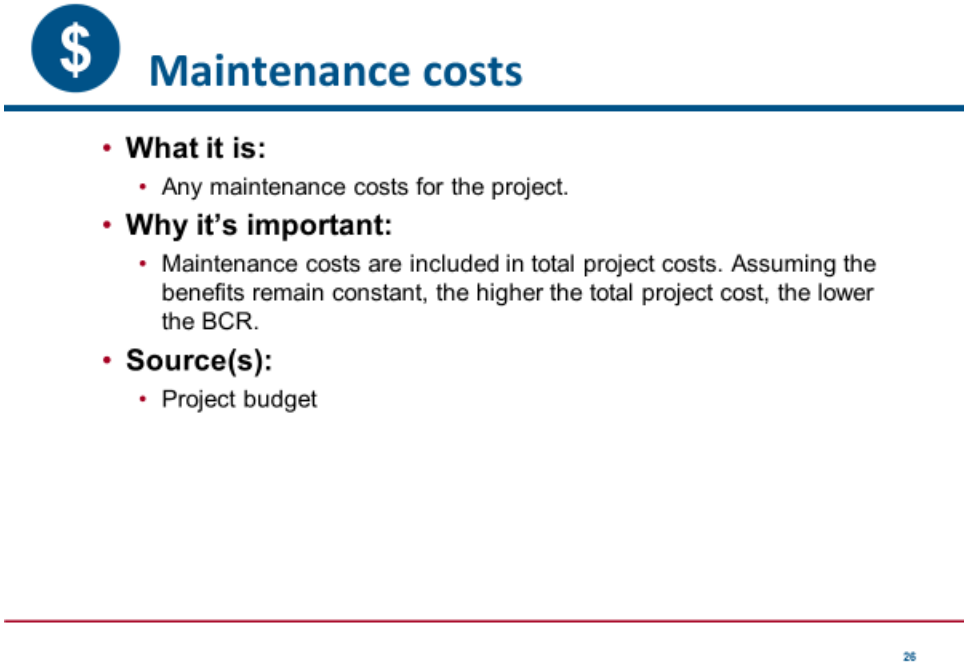
- The project cost is the denominator in the BCR equation. Assuming the benefits remain constant, the higher the project cost, the lower the BCR.

Source(s):

- Project budget

It's fine to use a ballpark if you are just trying to get an idea of whether your project is cost-effective, but if you are submitting a BCA as part of your project application, this MUST match the cost estimate in your application. Note that this is the full project cost, not just the federal share.

Maintenance costs



Visual 16: Maintenance costs

What it is:

- Any maintenance costs for the project.

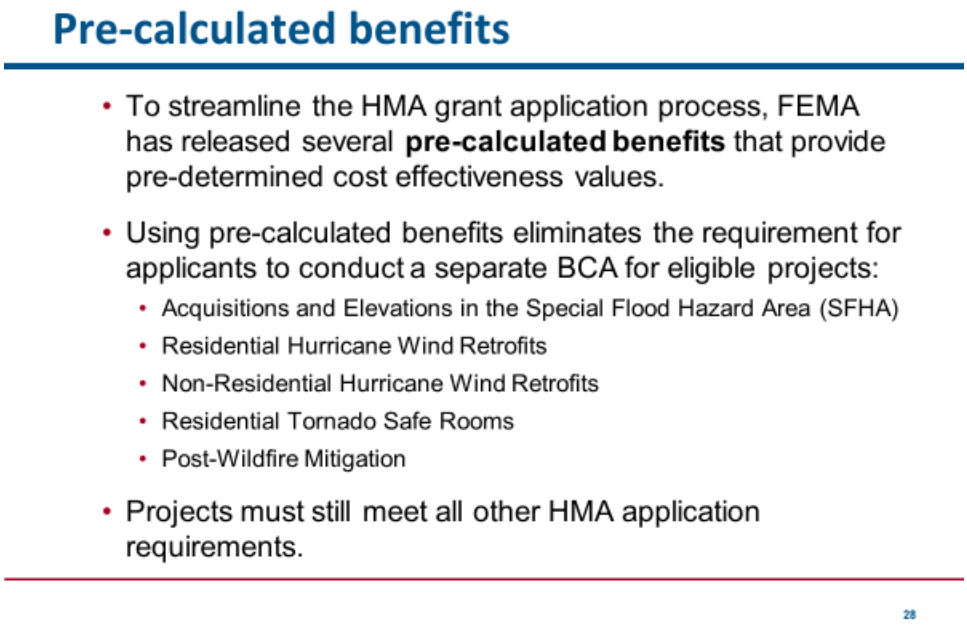
Why it's important:

- Maintenance costs are included in total project costs. Assuming the benefits remain constant, the higher the total project cost, the lower the BCR.

Source(s):

- Project budget

Pre-calculated benefits



Visual 17: Pre-calculated benefits

To streamline the HMA grant application process, FEMA has released several **pre-calculated benefits** that provide pre-determined cost effectiveness values.

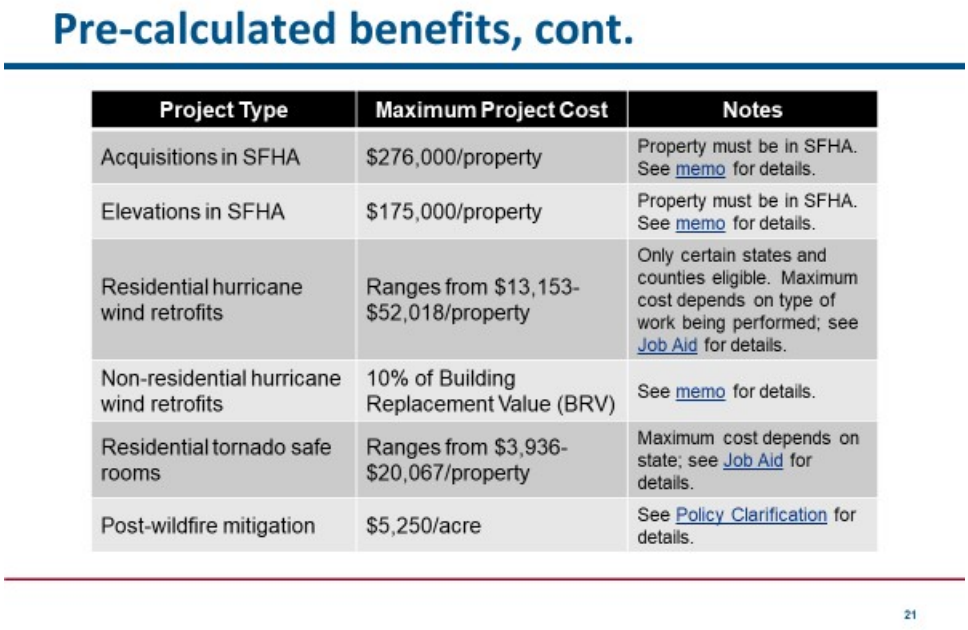
Using pre-calculated benefits eliminates the requirement for applicants to conduct a separate BCA for eligible projects:

- Acquisitions and Elevations in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)
- Residential Hurricane Wind Retrofits
- Non-Residential Hurricane Wind Retrofits
- Residential Tornado Safe Rooms
- Post-Wildfire Mitigation

Projects must still meet all other HMA application requirements.

Any time you start a BCA, check FEMA's BCA webpage (https://www.fema.gov/benefit-cost-analysis) for pre-calculated benefits.

Pre-calculated benefits



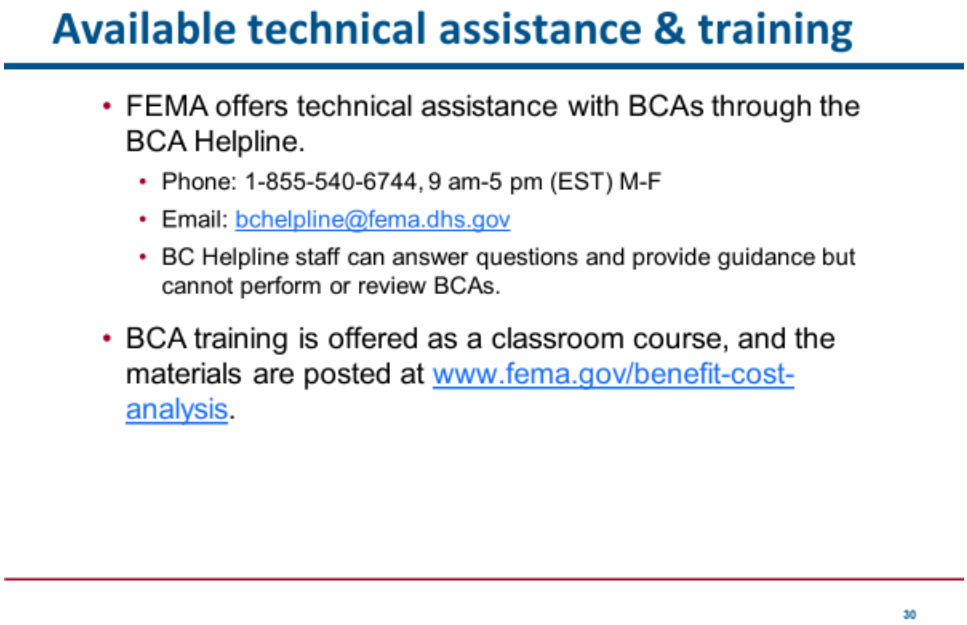
Visual 18: Pre-calculated benefits, cont.

See the table for a summary of currently available pre-calculated benefits.

Project Type	Maximum Project Cost	Notes
Acquisitions in SFHA	$276,000/property	Property must be in SFHA. See memo for details.
Elevations in SFHA	$175,000/property	Property must be in SFHA. See memo for details.
Residential hurricane wind retrofits	Ranges from $13,153-$52,018/property	Only certain states and counties eligible. Maximum cost depends on type of work being performed; see Job Aid for details.
Non-residential hurricane wind retrofits	10% of Building Replacement Value (BRV)	See memo for details.
Residential tornado safe rooms	Ranges from $3,936-$20,067/property	Maximum cost depends on state; see Job Aid for details.
Post-wildfire mitigation	$5,250/acre	See Policy Clarification for details.

Table 1: Pre-calculated benefits

Technical assistance and training



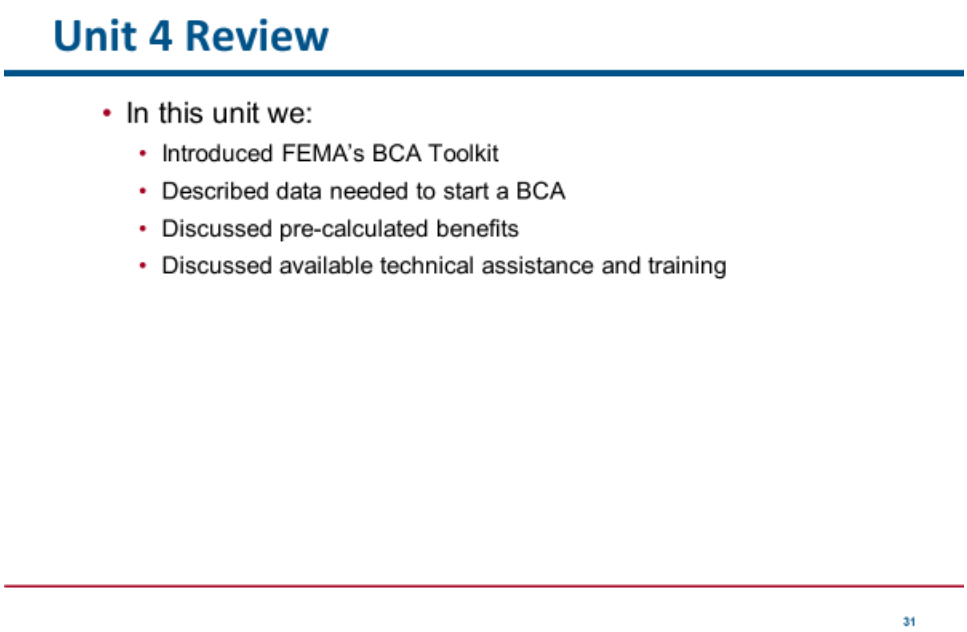
Visual 19: Technical assistance and training

FEMA offers technical assistance with BCAs through the BCA Helpline.

- Phone: 1-855-540-6744, 9 am-5 pm (EST) M-F
- Email: bchelpline@fema.dhs.gov
- BC Helpline staff can answer questions and provide guidance but cannot perform or review BCAs.

BCA training is offered as a classroom course, and the materials are posted at www.fema.gov/benefit-cost-analysis.

Unit 4 Review



Visual 20: Unit 4 Review

In this unit we:

- Introduced FEMA's BCA Toolkit
- Described data needed to start a BCA
- Discussed pre-calculated benefits
- Discussed available technical assistance and training